



# Great Lakes VA Healthviews

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## Mindfulness

You may have seen the term mindfulness on magazine covers, in newspapers, or on TV shows. There is research that indicates mindfulness can help improve your physical and mental health, boost learning, and other great benefits. But what exactly is it?

Mindfulness is a state of active awareness of the present moment. You observe your thoughts or feelings without judging them as good or bad. You pay attention to the bodily sensations you are experiencing. You become aware of any judgment you are having about the experience and then let the judgment go. You simply accept what is happening, whether it is a pleasant or painful moment. Life is full of both positive and negative experiences. By accepting them for what they are, you can obtain a state of mind where calmness and contentment can grow.

Mindfulness can be used in many areas of your life. For example, mindful eating consists of being fully aware of the many sensations you encounter during a meal, such as taste, smell and texture. You pay attention to the thoughts and feelings you have while eating. The benefit of mindful eating is that you will become more aware of your body cues, such as if you are really hungry or only eating out of boredom, and when you are full.

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Use this simple exercise to ease your mind:

- ☼ Sit back in a chair with your feet on the ground
  - ☼ Close your eyes and pay attention to your breath
  - ☼ Follow the breath in through your mouth and nose, down into your lungs, and out as you exhale
  - ☼ Notice how your belly rises and falls as you breathe in and out
  - ☼ Notice how your body feels as it presses against the chair and your feet against the ground
- ☼ Do a mental scan from your head to your feet, noting if you have any pain or unusual sensations
  - ☼ If your mind wanders, congratulate yourself for noticing and bring your awareness back to your breath

Mindfulness does not need to take a lot of time to be beneficial. Start small and try this for just a few minutes each day, then work your way up to longer time periods.

For more information, or to access the online Stress Handbook, visit the Veterans Health Library on the MyHealtheVet web page or at [www.veteranshealthlibrary.org](http://www.veteranshealthlibrary.org).

*Submitted by:*  
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*Source:*  
<http://greatergood.berkeley.edu/topic/mindfulness>

## VA Launches New Online Anger Management Course

Anger is an emotion that all people feel – some more than others. It is a natural and normal emotion. Feelings of anger can range from mild irritation to fury and rage.

However, if your anger is felt too intensely or too often, or if you often lose control when angry, you may have an anger problem. Learn useful skills and tools to manage your anger and develop self-control over your thoughts and actions. It can also help you improve your personal and work relationships.

**[www.veterantraining.va.gov/aims/](http://www.veterantraining.va.gov/aims/)**



# Using the Prescription Tracker in MyHealtheVet

Most of the prescriptions you get from the VA will be sent to your home by the VA Mail Order Pharmacy. The Track Delivery feature in the Pharmacy section of My HealtheVet provides you with information about the delivery of prescriptions sent from the VA Mail Order Pharmacy Track in the past 45 days. This includes:

- ★ VA medicine that was refilled or renewed
- ★ Wound care supplies
- ★ Diabetic supplies
- ★ Other products/supplies processed by the VA Mail Order Pharmacy

You will be able to see when your prescription was shipped and what delivery service (UPS, Post Office) was used. There is no limit to the number of prescriptions you are able to track.

## How to Use the Prescription Tracker

- ★ Select the Pharmacy tab
- ★ Select the Prescription Refill History option

- ★ If the VA Mail Order Pharmacy has sent you a prescription in the last 45 days, the Prescription Tracking column will display a red Track Delivery button on the same row as the mailed prescription. Selecting the Track Delivery button takes you to the View Prescription Tracking Information Detail page.
- ★ The View Prescription Tracking Information Detail displays information about that specific prescription. It also shows a list of prescriptions or supplies that may be included in the same package.
- ★ The Tracking Number link will take you to the Delivery Service website for more detailed information.

You need to have an Advanced or Premium My HealtheVet account to use the prescription tracker. For more information about the different types of accounts or to register for My HealtheVet, talk to your health care team or the My HealtheVet coordinator at your facility.

Submitted by:  
Levi Laroco, RN, MSN  
My HealtheVet Coordinator  
Jesse Brown VAMC

Fill Date	Prescription	Status	Facility	Prescription Tracking
8/10/2014	<a href="#">CARBAMAZEPINE 200MG TAB</a> <a href="#">RX#3635933</a>	Refill in Process	SLC4	
8/5/2014	<a href="#">IBUPROFEN 400MG TAB</a> <a href="#">RX#3635916</a>	Active	SLC4	<a href="#">Track Delivery</a>
8/5/2014	<a href="#">MIRTAZAPINE 15MG TAB</a> <a href="#">RX#3635917</a>	Active	SLC4	<a href="#">Track Delivery</a>



# Be Physically Active

Did you know that less than half of U.S. adults get enough physical activity? No matter what your age or body type, you can benefit from even small amounts of activity.

## What are the benefits of being physically active?

- You will have greater energy and stamina.
- You may reduce your chances for developing diseases, such as depression, diabetes, heart disease, high blood pressure, obesity, stroke, and some kinds of cancer.

## How much physical activity do I need?

- Aim for about 2 hours each week of moderate-intensity physical activity. This means that when you move, you can talk but you can't sing. Try it! Choose activities you enjoy, such as walking fast, dancing, and raking leaves.
- To begin, get your body moving. Start at a level that is comfortable. When this level seems easy, add a little more activity each time. Every 10-minute session counts.
- You can also choose to aim for about an hour a week of vigorous-intensity physical activity per week. This means when you move, you can't say more than a few words without pausing for a breath. Try activities like jogging, jumping rope, swimming laps, or riding a bike uphill.
- If you have a chronic condition (such as diabetes, heart disease, or arthritis) or a health condition that concerns you, talk with your health care team before you begin.



## What other physical activities are good for me?

- Do strengthening activities at least twice each week. Try to use all the major muscle groups in your body. This means using the muscles in your legs, hips, back, chest, abdomen, shoulders, and arms. To strengthen these muscles, include resistance training or weight lifting. You can create resistance with elastic bands, handheld weights, or your own body weight. The muscles that do the work will strengthen over time.
- Stretching can help you increase flexibility, improve circulation and range of motion in your joints, and relieve stress. It is best to stretch when you are physically active. If you are not active on a regular basis, stretching at least three times each week is a good starting point.

If you have questions about how to make other healthy living changes, please talk with your health care team.

Source:

VHA National Center for Health Promotion and Disease Prevention:  
[www.prevention.va.gov](http://www.prevention.va.gov)

## There are thousands of health information websites...



## But only one designed for you.

[www.veteranshealthlibrary.org](http://www.veteranshealthlibrary.org)



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## Should I take Fiber Supplements?

Dietary fiber is a type of carbohydrate that our bodies don't digest. It is found in fruits, vegetables, and grains. It may be best known for promoting regular bowel movements. However, fiber also offers other health benefits such as keeping cholesterol levels in check, stabilizing blood sugar, and controlling appetite. It also makes you feel full faster, which can help with weight control.

There are two different types of fiber: soluble and insoluble, and they each have different effects on your body.

- Soluble fiber slows digestion. It may also help lower your blood sugar and cholesterol, making it important for preventing or managing diabetes and heart disease.
- Insoluble fiber speeds the passage of food through the stomach and intestines. It also adds bulk to your stool. This can help prevent constipation.



Many Americans don't eat enough whole grains, legumes, fruit, or vegetables – the main source of dietary fiber. Since we don't get the recommended 30 grams of fiber a day, could we benefit from fiber supplements? Is there a difference between the fiber in food and the fiber in a supplement?

Most high-fiber plant foods have both soluble and insoluble fiber. Supplements, on the other hand, provide only one or the other. When we rely on supplements, we miss out on the many other important benefits of food, such as vitamins and minerals. When we take a fiber supplement, that's all we get: fiber.

Try increasing the amount of oats, nuts, peas, beans, apples, citrus fruits, carrots, and barley that you eat each day. Increase your amount of fiber gradually over a period of several weeks to avoid cramps and gas. Drink 8 glasses of water a day to help the fiber move through your digestive system.

If you are still concerned that you're not getting enough fiber, talk to your Health Care Provider or Dietitian before starting a supplement. If they recommend a supplement, you should take it with meals to avoid blood sugar spikes.



*Submitted by:*  
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Registered Dietitian  
Jesse Brown VAMC



# HELP A FELLOW VET

Always **CALL** to  
**cancel or**  
**reschedule**  
if you can't keep  
your appointment!



# Great Lakes VA Healthviews



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**EXCELLENCE**  
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Your best source for information about your health will always be your health care team. We hope this newsletter will encourage you to ask questions about your health concerns.

## Phone Numbers for VISN 12 Hospitals

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## “Ask An Expert” Question or Idea for Future Articles

Do you have an “Ask An Expert” question or a suggestion for future topics for articles? Your ideas can be e-mailed or mailed to the Senior Editor.

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VISN 12 VA Healthcare facilities are accredited by The Joint Commission. Joint Commission evaluates healthcare facilities on quality, safety of patient care and safety of the environment.

If you have any concerns about patient care or safety in your facility, first contact the person in charge. If your concern cannot be resolved, the VA encourages you to contact Joint Commission. You may request a “public information interview.” Requests can be made to:

Division of Accreditation Operations, Office of Quality Monitoring  
The Joint Commission  
One Renaissance Boulevard, Oakbrook Terrace, IL 60181  
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Copies of Great Lakes VA Healthviews are available in the waiting rooms of the VISN 12 Medical Centers and community outpatient clinics.

You can view online or subscribe to the electronic version of this newsletter by going to the VISN 12 home page [www.visn12.va.gov](http://www.visn12.va.gov)

